

FROM THE TREATISE OF PERICTYONE\* ON THE  
DUTIES OF A WOMAN.

It is necessary that a woman should sufficiently possess a harmony full of prudence and temperance. For it is requisite that her soul

\* This Perictyone is different from her who was the mother of Plato.

should be vehemently inclined to the acquisition of virtue ; so that she may be just, brave, and prudent, and may be adorned with frugality, and hate vainglory. For, from the possession of these virtues, she will act worthily when she becomes a wife, towards herself, her husband, her children, and her family. Frequently, also, such a woman will act beautifully towards cities, if she happens to rule over cities or nations, as we see is [sometimes] the case in a kingdom. If, therefore, she subdues desire and anger, a divine harmony will be produced. Hence she will not be pursued by illegal loves, but she will love her husband, her children, and all her family. For such women as are fond of being connected with other men besides their husbands, become hostile to the whole of their families, both to those branches of it that are free, and those that are slaves. They also machinate stratagems against their husbands, and falsely represent them as the calumniators of all their acquaintance, in order that they alone may appear to be exceedingly benevolent ; and they govern their families in such a way as may be expected from those that are lovers of indolence. For from such conduct the destruction ensues of every thing which is common to the husband and wife. And thus much as to these particulars.

It is also requisite to lead the body to what is naturally moderate, with respect to nutriment, clothes, bathing, anointing, dressing the hair, and to whatever pertains to decoration from gold and jewels. For whatever of a sumptuous nature is employed by women in eating and drinking, in garments and trinkets, renders them disposed to be guilty of every crime, and to be unjust both to their husband's bed, and to every other person. It is requisite, therefore, that they should only satisfy hunger and thirst, and this from things easily procured; and that they should defend themselves from cold by garments of the simplest kind. But to be fed with things which are brought from a distant country, or which are obtained at a great price, is no small vice. It is also great folly to search after exceedingly elegant garments, which are variegated with purple, or any other precious colour. For the body wishes to be neither cold nor naked, but to be covered for the sake of decorum, and is not [externally] in want of any thing else. The opinion of men, however, in conjunction with ignorance, proceeds to inanities and superfluities. Hence a woman should neither be decorated with gold, nor with Indian gems, nor with the jewels of any other nation, nor plait her hair with abundance of art, nor be perfumed



with Arabian unguents, nor paint her face so that it may be more white or more red, nor give a dark tinge to her eyebrows and her eyes, nor artificially dye her gray hairs, nor frequently bathe. For the woman who seeks after things of this kind searches for a spectator of female intemperance. For the beauty which is produced by prudence, and not by these particulars, pleases women that are well born. Nor should she conceive that nobility and wealth, the being born in a great city, glory, and the friendship of renowned and royal men, are to be ranked among things that are necessary. For if they happen to be present, they should not be the cause to her of any molestation; and if they should not be present, she should not regret their absence. For a prudent woman will not be prevented from living [properly] without these. And if those great and much admired things which we have mentioned should not be present, her soul should not anxiously explore, but withdraw itself from them. For in consequence of drawing their possessor to misfortune, they are more noxious than beneficial. For to these, treachery, envy, and calumny are adjacent, so that such a woman cannot be free from perturbation.

It is also necessary that she should venerate

the Gods through good hope of obtaining felicity by this veneration, and by obeying the laws and sacred institutions of her country. But after the Gods, I say, that she should honour and venerate her parents. For these cooperate with the Gods in benefiting their children. Moreover, she ought to live with her husband legally and kindly, conceiving nothing to be her own property, but preserving and being the guardian of his bed. For in the preservation of this all things are contained. It is likewise requisite that she should bear every thing [in a becoming manner] which may happen to her husband, whether he is unfortunate in his affairs, or acts erroneously through ignorance, or disease, or intoxication, or from having connection with other women. For this last error is granted to men; but not to women, since they are punished for this offence. It is necessary, therefore, that she should submit to the law with equanimity, and not be jealous. She ought likewise to bear patiently his anger, his parsimony, and the complaints which he may make of his destiny, his jealousy, and his accusation of her, and whatever other faults he may inherit from nature. For all these she should cheerfully endure, conducting herself towards him with prudence



and modesty. For a wife who is dear to her husband, and who truly performs her duty towards him, is a [domestic] harmony, and loves the whole of her family, to which also she conciliates the benevolence of strangers. If, however, she neither loves her husband nor her children, nor her servants, nor wishes to see any sacrifice preserved; then she becomes the leader of every kind of destruction, which she likewise prays for, as being an enemy, and also prays for the death of her husband, as being hostile to him, in order that she may be connected with other men; and, in the last place, she hates whatever her husband loves. But it appears to me that a wife will be a [domestic] harmony, if she is full of prudence and modesty. For then she will not only love her husband, but also her children, her kindred, her servants, and the whole of her family, in which possessions, friends, citizens, and strangers are contained. She will likewise adorn the bodies of these without any superfluous ornaments, and will both speak and hear such things only as are beautiful and good. It is also requisite that she should act conformably to her husband's opinion in what pertains to their common life, and be satisfied with those relatives and friends that meet with his approbation.

And she will conceive those things to be pleasant and disagreeable which are thought to be so by her husband, unless she is entirely destitute of harmony.

FROM THE TREATISE OF PERICTYONE ON THE  
HARMONY OF A WOMAN\*.

PARENTS ought not to be injured either in word or deed ; but it is requisite to be obedient to them, whether their rank in life is small or great. And in every allotted condition of soul and body, and of external circumstances, in peace, also, and war, in health [and sickness†], in riches and in poverty, in renown and ignominy, and whether they are of the same class with most of the community, or are magistrates, it is necessary to be present with, and never to forsake them, and almost to submit to them even when they are insane. For such conduct will be wisely and cheerfully adopted by those that are pious. But he who despises his parents will, both among the living

\* In this extract no mention whatever is made of the harmony of a woman ; for it wholly consists of the duty of children to their parents.

† *καὶ νοσῶ* is omitted in the original, but ought, as it appears to me, to be inserted.



and the dead, be condemned for this crime by the Gods, will be hated by men, and under the earth will, together with the impious, be eternally\* punished in the same place by Justice, and the subterranean Gods, whose province it is to inspect things of this kind. For the aspect of parents is a thing divine and beautiful, and a diligent observance of them is attended with a delight such as neither the survey of the sun, nor of all the stars which dance round the illuminated heavens, is capable of producing, nor any other spectacle, should it even be greater than this. And, it appears to me, that the Gods are not envious† when they perceive that this takes place. Hence it is requisite to reverence parents both while they are living, and when they are dead, and never oppose them in any thing they may say or do. If also they are ignorant of any thing through deception or disease, their children should console

\* It is well observed by Olympiodorus, on the Phædo of Plato, “that the soul is not punished by divinity through anger but medicinally; and that by eternity of punishment we must understand punishment commensurate with the soul’s partial period; because souls that have committed the greatest offences cannot be sufficiently purified in one period.”

† For *φρονεειν* in this place, which is evidently erroneous, I read *φθορεειν*.



and instruct, but by no means hate them on this account. For no greater error and injustice can be committed by men than to act impiously towards their parents.

ON THE REVERENCE DUE TO PARENTS. FROM  
THE APOPHTHEGMS OF ARISTOXENUS, THE  
TARENTINE.

AFTER divinity and demons, the greatest attention should be paid to parents and the laws; not fictitiously, but in reality preparing ourselves to an observance of, and perseverance in, the manners and laws of our country, though they should be in a small degree worse than those of other countries.

AND IN THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE SAME  
WORK \*.

BUT after these things follow the honours which should be paid to living parents, it being right to discharge the first, the greatest, and

\* The whole of this extract is to be found in the fourth book of Plato's *Laws*. (See tom. viii. p. 187, and 188, of the Bipont edition.) But there is occasionally some little difference between the text of Plato and that of Aristoxenus, as the critical reader will easily discover. Neither Fabricius nor the editors of Stobæus have noticed the source of this extract.

the most ancient of all debts. Every one, likewise, should think that all which he possesses belongs to those who begot and nurtured him, in order that he may be ministrant to their want to the utmost of his ability, beginning from his property; in the second place discharging his debt to them from things pertaining to his body; and in the third place, from things pertaining to his soul; thus repaying with usury the cares and pains which his now very aged parents bestowed on him when he was young. Through the whole of life, likewise, it is requisite that he should particularly employ the most respectful language in speaking to his parents; because there is a most severe punishment for light and winged words; and Nemesis, the messenger of Justice, is appointed to be the inspector of every thing of this kind. When parents, therefore, are angry, it is requisite to yield to them, and to appease their anger, whether it is shown in words or in deeds; acknowledging that a father may reasonably be very much enraged with his son, when he thinks he has been injured by him. But on the death of parents, the most decent and beautiful monuments should be raised to them; not exceeding the usual magnitude, nor yet less than those which



our ancestors erected for their parents. Every year, too, attention ought to be paid to the decoration of their tombs. They should, likewise, be continually remembered and revered, and this with a moderate and appropriate expense. By always acting, therefore, and living in this manner, we shall each of us be rewarded according to our deserts, both by the Gods and those natures that are superior to us, and shall pass the greatest part of our life in good hope.